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Meany Denies AFL-CIO Received CIA Funds

By John Reddy

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BAL HARBOUR, Fla. —

George Meany, president of the 13,500,000-member AFL-CIO, denied Monday that the Central Intelligence Agency contributes money to the labor federation.

Meany, during a press conference after the first session of the federation's 29-member executive council, added:

"I would be opposed to it because of my naturally ingrained opposition to spy activities."

He said he supports the purposes of the CIA, but he maintained that the AFL-CIO "shouldn't be helped from the outside."

Victor Reuther, whose brother Walter is president of the United Auto Workers, had charged that the American Institute of Free Labor had received CIA funds in the past.

He Ought To Know

Meany explained that he once opposed a grant to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions from an institution about which he said he had doubts.

Meany said he would know if CIA money had been going to the ICFTU because he was "on the finance subcommittee and ought to know."

He was asked about the alleged acceptance of CIA funds by the American Newspaper Guild to promote professional newspaper editorial unions in Latin America. He said: "I know nothing about it and will not comment."

Lav Lovestone, director of AFL-CIO international affairs, said that involvement of

the CIA in American labor's overseas organizing efforts in the free world could only be a detriment.

Reject Travel Money

"We resist it," he said. "We reject money offered for transportation by the State Department when we travel overseas."

Lovestone, a strong anti-Communist, long has been regarded as a combatant with Victor Reuther, president of the international affairs department of the United Auto Workers.

Earlier, Labor Sec. W. Willard Wirtz, here to seek labor support for a proposed federal Economic Affairs Department, refused to comment on the allegation of CIA involvement in the labor movement.

"I could not responsibly comment," he said.

Wirtz did say, however, he felt organized labor had an open role to play in advancing the cause of labor in "creating better international relations."

Takes The Spotlight

The press conference focused on the CIA's possible involvement in the labor movement, resulting from recent disclosure that the intelligence agency has funneled funds into international student organization programs.

Meany's willingness to elaborate on his feelings about the CIA, after first saying he would not, upstaged the executives' rebuke of Walter Reuther.

In a prepared statement, adopted unanimously by the executive council, the AFL-CIO accused Reuther of failing to use "free and open in-

the American labor movement. Meany said that posts resigned by Reuther would be filled at the current meeting of the policymaking body.

Reuther and other UAW officers resigned key federation positions on Feb. 3 and a week later attacked the AFL-CIO leadership in a 7,000-word "bill of particulars."

Denies A Feud

Meany said the only communication he has had with Reuther since sitting with him at a luncheon in January was to receive a copy of the UAW's administrative letter which detailed Reuther's and the UAW's complaints.

Referring to published accounts of a personality clash between himself and Reuther, Meany said:

"Let me make this crystal clear — this is no feud."

He added that he and Reuther have "not had a cross word" in more than five years.

Asked if he could comment on the impact of the UAW's threatened withdrawal from the AFL-CIO, Meany said: "I can, but I won't."

Auto workers leaders have called a special convention in Detroit on April 20 to ask authority to disaffiliate with the federation.

On the Friday withdrawal of UAW local unions from the Chicago Federation of Labor and Industrial Union Council, Meany said: "They've got a right to withdraw if they want to."

The executive council's statement appeared to leave the door open for Reuther to bring his complaints formally before the council.

"The officers and members of the executive council de-

the AFL-CIO to receive, consider, debate and act upon any complaint, charge, proposal or program—novel or ancient—that any affiliate . . . desires to advance and advocate."

The council expressed willingness to act on the matter "any time" and said it would call a special convention, if necessary.

The executive council action, Meany said, would not affect Reuther's position as president of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department. The IUD is composed of 59 affiliated international unions with a total membership of 7,000,000.

The former New York plumber said he looked with disfavor on the proposed new Cabinet department to combine the activities of the present Commerce and Labor departments, along with various functions of other agencies. Meany said if other special-interest agencies are eliminated, "I presume we can live with it."

Wirtz, during his press conference, said he had not solicited a reaction from the executive council for support of the newly proposed Cabinet-level department.

He also told the labor leaders he would begin a review of their complaints about certain applications of the Landrum-Griffin Act. The federation's Maritime Trades Department last week charged that information given by unions in compliance with the act was being used by other government agencies.